

NJ Wildlife Updates

For License Agents and Fish & Wildlife Constituents

September 2002

NJ Department of Environmental Protection

Division of Fish & Wildlife

Director's Message



NEW JERSEY DIVISION OF
Fish and Wildlife

At no other time in our history have more outdoor enthusiasts shared the same space during the same times in pursuit of their enjoyment of the fish and wildlife resource through fishing, hunting, wildlife watching, camping, hiking, etc. Although New Jerseyans are fortunate to have nearly one million

acres of public open space to enjoy the outdoors, we have millions of people sharing that same space. Preliminary results from the 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation reveal that New Jersey had 806,000 people participate in fishing, 135,000 people participate in hunting and 1,640,000 people participate in wildlife watching. Considering that the seasons for all these activities have lengthened due to the many opportunities provided by our incredible natural diversity and innovative management programs and that activity seasons increasingly overlap, there is a greater need for awareness among all outdoor user groups. Our natural treasure is rich enough for all of us to share. Hunters, anglers and wildlife watchers can all share the same space if we have mutual respect for individual pursuits and show some common courtesy when sharing our outdoor space with others.

Bob McDowell, Director

WILDLIFE HERITAGE FESTIVAL

In celebration of National Hunting and Fishing Day and to raise awareness about an important and precious resource, our water, the Division of Fish and Wildlife in partnership with the Upper Delaware Watershed Management Project will host the Upper Delaware Wildlife Heritage Festival. The event will take place on Saturday, September 28, 2002 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Pequest Trout Hatchery and Natural Resource Education Center in Oxford located in Warren County. The center is located nine miles west of Hackettstown on Route 46.

The festival will highlight the historical and present importance of wildlife, wildlife related recreation and man and animal's mutual reliance on the watershed. We anticipate 3,000 folks participating in an array of hands-on family-oriented educational activities, outdoor skill activities, primitive living skill demonstrations, art, live music, and lots of food.

YOUTH HUNTING DAYS

September 21, 2002	Youth Waterfowl Hunt Day
November 2, 2002	Youth Upland Bird Hunting Day
November 2, 2002	Youth Pheasant Hunt
November 23, 2002	Youth Deer Hunt Day
April 12, 2003	Youth Turkey Hunting Day

Refer to the 2002 *New Jersey Fish and Wildlife Digest* hunting issue for additional information on youth hunting days.

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HIBERNIA MINE BAT PROGRAM

Hibernia Mine Bat Programs at the Wildcat Ridge Wildlife Management Area will be conducted again this year by division biologists and volunteers to teach people about the significance of the mine and the thousands of bats that congregate at the mine to hibernate. Programs will begin in late August when the bats begin to congregate and continue through mid-October. The programs begin at dusk with a 20-30 minute talk about New Jersey's bats, the importance of abandoned mines and the history of the Hibernia Mine. A short walk follows to the entrance of the mine after dark to view the bats leaving the mine for their evening foraging. Occasionally, we are lucky

enough to observe large numbers of bats "swarming" near the mine entrance.

Programs are scheduled weekday evenings with several Friday evening dates to accommodate school-aged children. The number of participants is limited between 20 and 30 for each program. If you are interested in attending a program, please call 908-735-8975 for reservations.



HUNTER EDUCATION TESTING SCHEDULE

Interested in a Hunter Education Program or know someone who is? It has never been more convenient than now thanks to our new modified home-study video based course, with one-day testing and field sessions conducted at centralized teaching locations throughout the state. Simply pick up a videotape, manual and workbook series which covers the shotgun, muzzleloading/modern rifle and bow and arrow courses. Videotapes and workbooks are available at license agents and Division field offices. Learn the classroom material and complete the workbook at your own pace at home. Practice exams are available on our website for the students to use after completing their video, manual and workbook exercises.

When you are ready select the location and date which best suits your schedule for a one-day course for archery, shotgun, rifle/muzzleloader or all three classes (if you are prepared to do so). During the one-day field session the student will be placed with an instructor to complete an extensive field walk and mandatory live-fire session. A review of the home study material and homework will be offered before the day concludes with a mandatory written exam.

Following is the October and November schedule of testing facilities and field session dates for the entire state. If you want a September class, please check our website at www.njfishandwildlife.com for dates and locations. The schedule is also available at license agents and Division offices.

October 6—Fort Dix (Burlington Co.) and Northern Region Office (Hunterdon Co.)

October 12—Telco (Camden Co.)

October 13—Cherry Ridge Range (Sussex Co.) and Good Sports Gun Club (Cumberland Co.)

October 20—Black River WMA (Morris Co.), Fort Dix (Burlington Co.) and USANA (Salem Co.)

October 26—Good Sports Gun Club (Cumberland Co.)

October 27—Cherry Ridge Range (Sussex Co.)

November 3—Black River WMA (Morris Co.)

November 10—Good Sports Gun Club (Cumberland Co.) and USANA (Salem Co.)

November 17—Fort Dix (Burlington Co.)

5 NEW CONSERVATION OFFICERS JOIN THE DIVISION

The Division's Bureau of Law Enforcement recently hired five additional Conservation Officers. These newly hired conservation officers along with the 10 previously hired officers last year bring the number of field officers closer to full capacity.

Officers Linda Anne Paul and Joe Kuechler have been assigned to District 2 in the Northern Region. Officer Wesley Kille has been assigned to District 5 in the Southern Region. Conservation Officers Craig James and Jeremy Trembley have been assigned to District 8 in the Marine Region.

The new officers must complete a mandatory 40-hour firearm qualification course for both handgun and shotgun and the Bureau's six-week in-service training acade-

my. After graduating from the bureau's academy, each officer will be assigned a certified field-training officer for several weeks of instruction afield prior to attending the Police Academy. After the Police Academy, the conservation officers again will report to their respective field-training officer and then complete a one-year probationary period.

Division conservation officers possess full police powers within the State of New Jersey. All conservation officers must possess the minimum requirement of a Bachelor of Science Degree in biology or natural resource management with 18 credits in fish and wildlife science, plus one year's experience in law enforcement, wildlife or environmental science.

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE (CWD) OF DEER AND ELK

WHAT IS IT?

Chronic wasting disease of mule deer, rocky mountain elk and white-tailed deer is a disease, which many scientists believe may be caused by an infectious protein, termed a prion. It causes fatal damage to the central nervous system. The brain has a microscopic sponge-like appearance and places it in a group of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs). Scrapie of domestic sheep and goats, bovine spongiform encephalopathy or "Mad Cow Disease" of cattle and transmissible mink encephalopathy of farmed mink are all different types of TSEs in domestic and captive reared animals.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

The clinical signs are not unique to this disease, but loss of body weight, even as the deer or elk continues to eat is typical. The animals may walk in the same short path, repeatedly. They may be slightly unsteady standing with legs separated wider than normal. Some may have subtle head tremors and are found near streams or ponds. They may have periods when they appear sleepy or unresponsive or may carry their head down with their ears lowered. Increased salivation, drinking and urination may also occur.

HOW IS IT SPREAD?

CWD can be transmitted among adult deer and the prions have been found in the brain, eyes, spinal cord, spleen, tonsils and lymph nodes. This pattern of transmission and association of prions with lymph tissue in the mouth and intestinal tract has led to the hypothesis that the CWD agent may find its way through saliva, feces and urine onto grasses and other food. The prion is very resistant to traditional disinfectants and persists a long time in the environment.

HOW DO WE TEST FOR IT?

Currently there is no reliable test for this disease in live animals. Microscopic examination of the brain of deer, which die or are killed, reveals the sponge-like changes typical of CWD.

WHERE IS IT?

CWD in wild free-ranging deer and elk is known to exist in Colorado, Wyoming, Nebraska, South Dakota, Wisconsin, the Canadian province of Saskatchewan and recently, a CWD positive, emaciated mule deer was collected March 28 at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico. CWD in game farm elk and deer has been found in Colorado, Montana, South Dakota, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, Alberta and Saskatchewan.

IS IT IN NEW JERSEY?

Five hundred six deer heads, mostly from hunter-killed deer, were collected in a cooperative survey conducted by

the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife, USDA Veterinary Services, and the NJ Department of Agriculture during the 1997-98 hunting seasons. Brain was tested for chronic wasting disease and lymph nodes for bovine tuberculosis. No evidence of either disease was found. The statistical analysis indicates that if TB or CWD was present we are 99% confident it was in less than 1% of the adult deer. Without testing all of the animals in a population it is statistically impossible to say a disease is not there. Because of the sudden appearance of CWD in wild Wisconsin whitetails, the Division proposes to conduct another hunter survey of New Jersey deer for the CWD agent.

CAN HUMANS GET IT?

NO CASES OF HUMAN CREUTZFELDT-JAKOB DISEASE OR THE VARIANT HAS BEEN LINKED TO CWD OF DEER, in spite of a widely circulated unfounded story in the popular press alleging 3 young hunters diagnosed with CJD had in some way been exposed to CWD. In areas where the deer are infected, hunters are advised not to eat lymph nodes, spleen, brain, spinal cord and bone out the meat. The World Health Organization recommends deer or elk with evidence of CWD should not be eaten by people or other animals.

HOW CAN IT BE PREVENTED OR CONTROLLED?

The strategy, which makes most sense, is one of surveillance to detect the disease, limit movement of infected animals and slaughter of known infected herds.

HOW CAN THE HUNTERS HELP?

Hunters are asked not to shoot sick or abnormally behaving deer, but note the animal's location and report it to the Division's Office of Fish and Wildlife Health and Forensics at 908-735-6398 or a local Division field office with numbers listed in the Digest as soon as possible. Hunters can cooperate in donating the heads of their deer when asked by a Division Biologist at selected deer check stations.

HOW CAN CAPTIVE DEER OWNERS HELP?

Don't export or import deer in New Jersey until a national herd certification system is approved and the Division lifts the ban on such movement. If you have a deer, elk or other member of the deer family die of natural causes and especially one which is skinny at death, ensure the head is kept cool and immediately notify the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife at 908-735-6398 so arrangements can be made to collect a portion of the brain for testing for CWD.

For the full text of this article visit the following link on the Division of Fish and Wildlife website: www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/cwdinfo.htm. Links for chronic wasting disease, its management and related diseases are included in the full text.

RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS

Each of us would prefer to have our own private place to hunt, fish or trap; yet that is not always possible. Because many of us recreate on public land, with numerous seasons overlapping, those enjoying the wildlife resource will occasionally encounter others in the great outdoors. It is at these times that we must remember to ***respect the rights of others!***

For example, when you observe a waterfowl hunter with a setup of decoys, give the waterfowler a wider berth (perhaps 500 yards) as you small game hunt in an adjacent field or while bass fishing the same water body. Any closer and ducks flying near will flare instead of coming into the decoys. Likewise, it is rude behavior to move in on a hunter with dogs working a field for pheasant or quail in

hopes of getting a shot at a bird that may be flushed and missed. It is also unsportsmanlike to converge on a trout pool when you observe a fellow angler land a nice fish.

This November on some public land in New Jersey, bow hunters, small game hunters, duck hunters, anglers and hikers will share the same grounds. All can enjoy the outdoors if we show respect and share the land with others. On the salt marsh, clambers and waterfowl hunters often vie for the same location. For some turkey hunting spots, one car in a parking lot may be enough. One unspoken rule of good sporting behavior is: first come - first served! There will always be another place, another day, to enjoy the great outdoors peacefully. ***Respect the rights of others***; it is what each of us expect in return.

SHELLFISHING AND HUNTING ON THE NAVESINK AND SHREWSBURY RIVERS

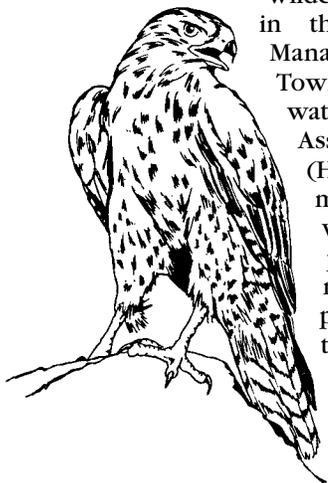
After being closed for approximately 25 years to the direct harvest of shellfish, in 1997 and 2001 portions of the Navesink and Shrewsbury rivers were upgraded to Seasonally Approved for harvest from November 1 to April 30 each year due to improving water quality. This reclassification was the result of cooperative efforts of the DEP, local municipalities and individuals to reduce nonpoint source pollution in the region.

While the seasonal opening of these waters was well received by recreational and commercial shellfishermen, the reclassification did result in some unexpected problems. For a portion of the seasonal shellfish opening,

waterfowl hunters use much of the same area. Shellfishing activity was an obvious problem to waterfowl hunters enjoying their sport on the river and shellfishermen could not work in areas where hunters were set up.

In an effort to resolve this spatial conflict, Division staff met with representatives of both user groups to discuss an equitable resolution to the problem. In the end, both groups agreed that they would respect the rights of others and operate on a "first come-first served" basis. Whether a waterfowl hunter or shellfisherman, enjoy your outdoor pursuits along the Navesink and Shrewsbury, but keep the "golden rule" in mind at all times.

WILDCAT RIDGE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA HAWK WATCH



Wildcat Ridge Hawkwatch, located in the Wildcat Ridge Wildlife Management Area in Rockaway Township is a full-time hawk watch for the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA). It is manned six months of the year by Division volunteers and it is a great place to see and learn about migrating birds. A small interpretive center is maintained by the Division and the WMA contains miles of hiking trails that are part of the Highlands Trail Network.

Hawks are counted because they are bio-indicators of the ecosystem in

which they live, the same system in which we live. The spring season starts on February 15 and goes through May 15. The fall season starts on August 15 and runs through November 15. During these times an official counter covers the watch 7 days per week, usually from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. (Heavy rain or snow closes the watch.) Spring season peaks around mid-April, and fall season peaks around mid-September.

There are 16 species of hawks that migrate through the Valley. The majority of the migrant raptors are broad-winged hawks. (In Sept. of 2001, over 6,000 broad-wings were counted in one day.) Over 80 bald eagles and 17 golden eagles have been recorded here during the fall flight. The highest total fall count was over 18,000 hawks.

Directions to the watch can be found at <http://www.netcom.com/~billyg>. Or in the New Jersey Wildlife Viewing Guide. Once you arrive at the parking area, the walk is 9/10ths of a mile up a gravel road or on a blazed trail.

FALL AND WINTER TROUT STOCKING

Our popular Fall Trout Stocking Program was initiated in the early 1980's and will be continued this fall. Approximately 50,000 production rainbow trout averaging 10", and excess broodstock averaging 17" will be liberated throughout the state's major trout waters beginning the first week in October and continuing for three weeks. The trout are raised at the Division's Pequest Trout Hatchery. Trout stocking information will be available on the Division's website (www.njfishandwildlife.com) and on the trout stocking hotline (609-633-6765) by the end of September.

The Winter Trout Stocked Lakes Program will also be continued this year. This will be the third year of this extremely popular and successful program that offers

anglers increased fishing opportunities during the winter months. Twenty-four lakes geographically distributed throughout the state will be stocked in late November in North Jersey and early January in South Jersey. Targeted lakes range in size from five to 100 acres and have shoreline access and/or boat launching sites. Waters to be stocked are approved trout stocked lakes and exclude lakes that were stocked in the fall. Interstate Highway 195 will serve as the dividing line between North and South Jersey lakes with the exception of Topenemus Lake, which will be stocked along with the South Jersey waters. Approximately 13,000 fish averaging 11" will be liberated under the winter trout-stocking program.

2002 FALL TURKEY SEASON PERMITS AVAILABLE

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife will offer unclaimed turkey permits at three Division offices beginning **Monday, September 23, 2002**. This special over-the-counter sale will enable hunters who did not apply for a permit, were not selected in the lottery, or who wish to obtain an extra permit an opportunity to do so. The Fall Turkey Season is Monday, October 28—Saturday, November 2, 2002.

Permits are only available for the following Turkey Hunting Areas: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10. Sales will be held weekdays ONLY from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, and from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. for as long as the supply lasts. Adults interested in purchasing an unclaimed permit must bring their 2002 hunting license along with cash or check for \$21 per permit. Youth hunters must bring their youth license, hunter education certificate or previous year's youth license and cash or check for \$12 per permit.

It is not necessary for the hunter to appear in person, but the individual buying the permit must have the hunter's 2002 hunting license and necessary fee. An individual standing in line is limited to purchasing permits for

a maximum of three people. Photocopies of licenses will NOT be accepted.

Additional permits can be purchased for any hunting area with permits still available. Hunters may buy as many permits as they wish, however, in the interest of fairness, hunters may only purchase one permit per license as long as there is a line.

Permits will be sold on a first come, first served basis at the following Division offices:

Pequest Trout Hatchery and Natural Resource Education Center, nine miles west of Hackettstown on Route 46 in Oxford, Warren County.

Northern Region Office, westbound Rt. 78, take exit 13 to Rt. 173; eastbound Rt. 78, take exit 12 to Rt. 173, in Hampton, Hunterdon County.

Trenton Main Office, 501 East State Street, Third Floor, in Trenton, Mercer County.

For more information on over-the-counter turkey permit sales please call the 24-hour computerized permit hotline at (609) 292-9192.

YOUTH ARCHERY, SHOTGUN & TRAPPING LICENSES

In December 1999, the Legislature approved a new fee structure for sporting licenses. As part of the new structure, youths, 15 years of age and under, are able to hunt, fish and trap for free, provided they have passed the appropriate hunter education course. The youth firearm, bow and arrow or trapping license is valid from time of issuance until the end of the year that he or she turns 16.

Resident and non-resident youths who have not received their license can obtain their licenses at the following offices. Hunters must call the appropriate office BEFORE visiting to make sure that a trained staff member will be present to issue the license. He/she must also bring an original hunting license or their hunter education course completion card. Note that a license will NOT be issued without one of these forms of identification.

Nacote Creek Research Station, P.O. Box 418, Port Republic, NJ 08241 (609-748-2063)

Southern Region Office, 220 Blue Anchor Rd., Sicklerville, NJ 08081 (1-877-2HUNTJN)

Central Region Office, 386 Clarksville-Robbinsville Rd., Robbinsville, NJ 08691 (609-259-2132)

Trenton Office, 501 E. State St., Station Plaza 5, 3rd Floor, P.O. Box 400, Trenton, NJ 08625-0400 (609-292-2965)

Northern Region Office, 26 Rt. 173 West, Hampton, NJ 08827 (908-735-7040)

Pequest Trout Hatchery & Natural Resource Education Center, 605 Pequest Rd., Oxford, NJ 07863 (908-637-4125)

FALL FISHING FOR TROPHIES

As the days grow shorter and temperatures begin to cool and the leaves change color, wildlife, including fish, sense these signs and begin to prepare for the onset of winter. With dropping water temperatures fish, especially coolwater species like walleye and muskellunge become more active and put on the feed bag.

The fall, a period of comfortable temperatures, brilliant foliage and uncrowded lakes and rivers, is an ideal time to fish for walleyes and muskellunge. These species move from their deeper summer refuges to the shallower shoreline areas. They are active and hungry.

New Jersey offers numerous opportunities to catch both walleye and muskellunge, including trophy size fish. Spring broodstock trap netting revealed their presence in several water bodies. Two walleyes weighing between 11 and 12 pounds were captured in Swartswood Lake. The first muskellunge in New Jersey to measure over 50 inches was captured in Greenwood Lake. The list doesn't stop there, as there were trophy size walleyes and muskellunge captured at Monksville Reservoir, walleyes in Greenwood Lake and muskellunge in Echo Lake Reservoir.

The Division of Fish and Wildlife has an aggressive walleye and muskellunge (including tiger muskies) hatchery stocking program. Walleye stocking began in 1988 and muskellunge in 1993 whereas tiger muskies have been stocked intermittently since 1978.

Walleye fishing, in terms of popularity, is the fastest growing sport fishery in the country. In addition to having a chance to catch a trophy size fish the fall is a perfect time to catch eating size (3 to 5 lb.) walleyes and sample one of the best tasting freshwater fish. The top walleye waters are Monksville Reservoir, Delaware River, Swartswood, Hopatcong and Greenwood Lakes.

Muskellunge, the true trophy freshwater fish, are growing to very desirable size in New Jersey waters. Known as the fish of 10,000 casts, muskellunge in New Jersey do not stick by that standard and are routinely caught with less effort. The state's top waters are Greenwood Lake, Delaware River, Monksville and Echo Lake Reservoir. Lake Hopatcong is coming on strong and Mercer Lake, the latest addition to our stocking program in 1998 is showing good potential. A Muskies Inc. angler reported catching 30 muskellunge up to 38 inches in Mercer Lake in 2001.

Tiger muskie, a cross between a northern pike and muskellunge have also been showing their trophy potential. A 43 and 44 inch tiger were reported caught from Furnace Lake (Warren County) this summer. This hybrid is known to bite more readily than the true-strain muskellunge. The top tiger fishery by far is Greenwood Lake. Other good waters include Manasquan Reservoir, Deal Lake, Rancocas Creek, and Lake Hopatcong.

Now is the time to enjoy the best fishing of the season for walleyes and muskellunge in the gorgeous solitude of the fall season.

GARDEN STATE DEER CLASSIC

This year's Garden State Deer Classic will be held in conjunction with the Garden State Outdoor Show in Edison, scheduled for January 2003. This promises to be one of the best-attended Classics. A host of special trophy deer head displays and seminars are planned and staff and deer hunting experts will be on hand to answer your questions about deer and deer hunting.

The annual Deer Classic showcases the top New Jersey deer entered each year in the New Jersey's "Outstanding Deer Program". This program was initiated in 1964 and includes categories for typical and nontypical antlered deer taken with bow, shotgun and muzzleloading rifle, in addition to recognizing bucks with a field dress weight exceeding 200 pounds and does with a field dress weight exceeding 135 pounds. Minimum scores are as follows: Typical Firearm (125), Non-Typical Firearm (135), Typical Archery (125), Non-Typical Archery (135), Typical Muzzleloader (125) and Non-Typical Muzzleloader (135).

Any properly licensed hunter can enter the program by obtaining an application from the Division or our website, www.njfishandwildlife.com. The antlers must be scored by official Boone and Crockett measurers. Division staff are certified scorers and will score antlers in the fall on selected dates. At the Classic, awards are issued to the top entries in each category. All entries are entered into the ALL-TIME list.

If you would like an entry application via mail, send a self-addressed, stamped (\$0.57) business size (#10) envelope to: Outstanding Deer Program, Division of Fish and Wildlife, P.O. Box 400, Trenton, N.J. 08625-0400.

